

Sermon outline notes: Psalm 116 An Experience of Deliverance.

Introduction

This is a psalm which is clearly born out of an experience where the writer was staring death in the face. It is a psalm expressing the Psalmist's gratitude to God for his deliverance. It is a psalm charged with emotional intensity and expressed in a very personal way—notice the pronouns 'I', 'my', 'me' which dominate practically every verse.

1) A dangerous situation verse 3

- Using language borrowed from Psalm 18 v 5.
- We do not know the precise nature of this mortal danger, but we do know that the Psalmist was near to a state of total emotional collapse.

2) A desperate prayer verse 4

- A rare Hebrew phrase is used here— it should be rendered 'I kept on calling'.
- The Psalmist seems to feel that there was no human help available— he was alone and afraid.
- But in the midst of his isolation he discovered something about himself which seems to have taken him by surprise in verse 11— 'I believed'.

3) A divine initiative verse 5-6

- The Psalmist's spiritual intuition convinces him that his escape was not just coincidence, but an answer to prayer—God had stepped into the situation, and answered my desperate plea verse 6b.
- Why had the Lord delivered him?:-
 - a) Because the Psalmist was simple hearted— the word used means someone who is gullible, easily led astray. God pitied this man's simplicity, verse 6

- b) Because God valued his life verses 15-16. The Psalmist discovered himself to be a child of God, special to God, one of God's own people.
- c) Because God wanted his friendship verse 9. The phrase 'walk before the Lord' has the idea of an intimate conducting of your life in God's presence. It's a phrase used of Abraham.

4) A dedicated life verses 12-14

"How can I repay the Lord?"

- a) I can take up the salvation he has provided for me, verse 13a.
- b) I pledge myself to be a man of prayer verses 2 and 17.
- c) I will make a public commitment verses 14 and 18.

Conclusion

According to the Bible whether we realise it or not we are all in a life threatening crisis here and now. The deliverance this Psalmist talks about here is a model of the deliverance every single human being needs from a universal peril: the judgement of God. We can be 'saved' in that same four stage sequence that this psalm outlines.

Points To Ponder

- 1) Share reactions to the sermon. What points particularly spoke to you. Was anything said with which you disagreed. If so, why?
- 2) How do you react to the truth that God wants your friendship? "I suggest that there is no discovery in the Bible more thrilling than to realise that Christianity is not just a matter of how we feel about God— it is about how God feels about us!" Would you agree with this quote?
- 3) Is there anything further you need to do in response to verse 12: 'How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?'